PUBLIC OPINION

IN JORDAN ABOUT THE UNITED NATIONS

The UN Department of Public Information commissioned a public opinion poll in Jordan to assess the awareness, knowledge and image of the UN. The poll was carried out during October 1990.

■ THE RESULTS IN BRIEF

- Almost all Jordanians have heard of the United Nations and about three quarters are able to name a UN-related institution or body.
- Most Jordanians think the UN is doing a poor job. The Organization is rated according to perceptions of its handling of the Palestinian question.
- Most Jordanians are interested in the activities of the UN in the areas of international peace and security, human rights and refugee resettlement.

ABILITY TO NAME A UN INSTITUTION

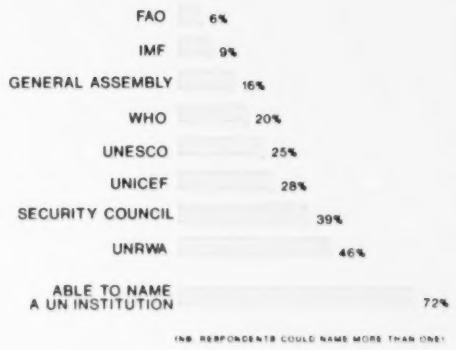

FIGURE 1

AWARENESS AND KNOWLEDGE OF THE UN

Ninety-nine per cent of Jordanians know about the United Nations. Students and people in higher income groups are most familiar with the international Organization.

Seventy-two per cent of Jordanians were able to name a UN-related institution or body. Not surprisingly, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) which maintains a vital presence in the Middle East region is the most known. Forty-six per cent of those surveyed named UNRWA, 39 per cent the Security Council, 28 per cent UNICEF, 25 per cent UNESCO, and 20 per cent WHO.

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IDENTIFYING THE UN SECRETARY-GENERAL

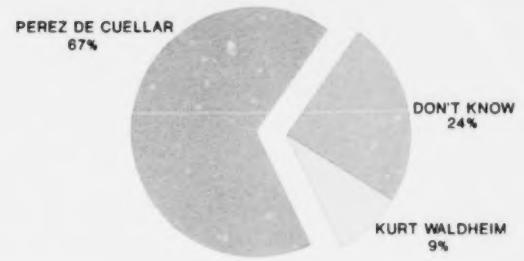

FIGURE 2

UN PERFORMANCE RATING

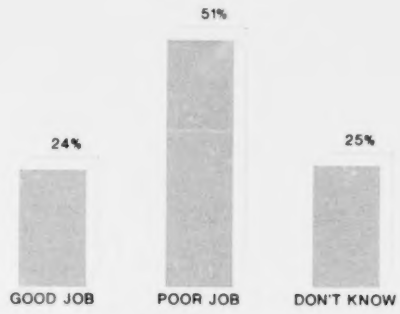

FIGURE 3

Almost all socio-demographic groups displayed extensive knowledge of the United Nations. Overall, students and people in the higher income brackets were more knowledgeable about the Organization.

IDENTIFICATION OF THE UN SECRETARY-GENERAL

Sixty-seven per cent of those polled correctly identified Javier Pérez de Cuéllar as the UN Secretary-General. The Secretary-General was well known among those with a university education (90 per cent) as well as high income earners (89 per cent). Eighteen to twenty-nine year-olds were also more likely to identify the UN Secretary-General. Nine per cent of the population thought Kurt Waldheim was still the UN Secretary-General.

RATING UN PERFORMANCE

Although the United Nations is well-known in Jordan, most of those surveyed were not satisfied with its performance. Those who said the UN is doing a good job (24 per cent) were about one half of those who said it is not.

The most positive about UN performance were secondary school students (32 per cent) followed by high income earners (25 per cent). Those with a university education were the most critical of the performance of the Organization.

REASONS FOR UN PERFORMANCE RATING

Most of those who rated the performance of the Organization favourably commended it for providing emergency assistance to developing countries. Others cited UN efforts in refugee resettlement, peace and security, seeking solutions to regional conflicts and providing special programmes for women and children.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON THE UN

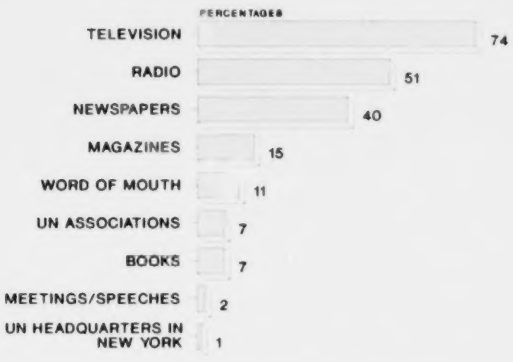

FIGURE 4

TEACHING ABOUT THE UN

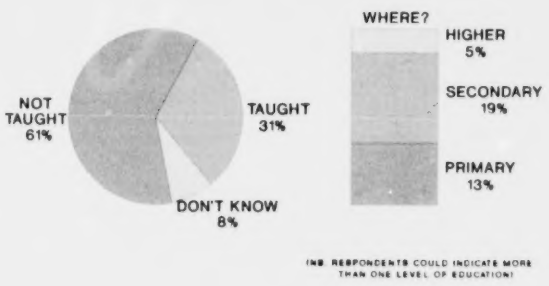

FIGURE 5

A majority of those who rated UN performance as poor said the United Nations is taking a one-sided position regarding the Palestinian question (45 per cent). Others contended that the UN does not operate on objective principles and is not effective in implementing its resolutions. Some felt the United Nations was handicapped by the use of the veto by some Member States.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Broadcast and print media are the prime sources of information on the United Nations. Television is the leading source among all the various media. Proportionately, high income earners and college students use television more than other groups. All socio-demographic groups cited word of mouth as an important source of information on the United Nations. About a third of all Jordanians recalled being taught about the United Nations at school—a majority in high school. There is more teaching about the UN in urban areas than in rural areas.

INTEREST IN UN ISSUES

Most Jordanians are interested in the activities of the United Nations dealing with international peace and security, human rights and refugee resettlement (see Fig. 6). About two thirds of those surveyed expressed interest in the work of the UN in general.

CONCLUSION

Almost all Jordanians know of the United Nations and most of them show some knowledge of the Organization's institutions. Word of mouth is an important source of information on the UN for Jordanians. Those who cited television as their prime source of news on the United Nations had a greater knowledge of its institutions or bodies. The effectiveness of the Organization seems to be measured by how it is perceived in its handling of the Palestinian question.

INTEREST IN UNITED NATIONS ISSUES

	VERY INTERESTED %	SOMEWHAT INTERESTED %	NOT INTERESTED %
INT'L PEACE AND SECURITY	75	12	10
HUMAN RIGHTS	73	14	10
REFUGEES & DISASTER RELIEF	70	16	11
DISARMAMENT	67	17	13
CHILDREN'S ISSUES	64	20	14
AIDS	62	16	19
THE WORK OF THE UN IN GENERAL	61	20	15
WORLD FOOD PROBLEMS	60	22	15
DRUG ABUSE	56	23	18
INT'L LAW & TREATIES	56	20	20
CRIME PREVENTION	55	24	18
EQUAL RIGHTS FOR WOMEN	53	22	22
DECOLONIZATION	53	21	22
RACIAL DISCRIMINATION	53	21	22
INT'L DEBT CRISIS	52	21	23
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	49	26	22
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION	46	25	26
POPULATION ISSUES	45	24	28
TRADE & DEVELOPMENT	45	23	29
IMPROVING HOUSING CONDITIONS	44	23	30
NEW WORLD INFORMATION ORDER	42	25	29
APARTHEID IN SOUTH AFRICA	42	25	30
AFRICAN ECONOMIC RECOVERY	39	19	37

(NB. SOME RESPONDENTS INDICATED "DON'T KNOW" OR GAVE NO ANSWER TO SOME OF THE ISSUES)

FIGURE 6

HOW THE POLL WAS DONE

The poll was conducted by Market Research Organization (MRO), a research company based in Amman, Jordan. They interviewed a nationally representative sample of 1,000 men and women aged 15 and over. The interviews were carried out face-to-face in respondents' homes during October 1990. The margin of sampling error is estimated at ± 3 per cent.

The Programme Evaluation and Communications Research Unit of the United Nations Department of Public Information undertakes public opinion polls to "analyse trends of public opinion throughout the world about the activities of the United Nations and the extent to which an informed understanding of the work of the United Nations is being secured". General Assembly resolution 13(1), paragraph 13, Annex 1 of 13 February 1946.

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